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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 24 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to state that the Government of Pakistan has decided to present its candidature for election to the Human Rights Council for one of the 13 Asian seats for the term 2006-2008, elections for which will be held on 9 May 2006.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, the Permanent Mission of Pakistan has the further honour to enclose a summary of Pakistan's contribution as well as its commitments and voluntary pledges to promote human rights (see annex).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 24 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

Pakistan's contribution, commitments and voluntary pledges to promote human rights

Pakistan has decided to present its candidature for election to the Human Rights Council for one of the 13 Asian seats for the term 2006-2008, elections for which will be held on 9 May 2006.

In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/251, in particular paragraph 8, following is a digest of Pakistan's contribution, voluntary pledges and commitments to promote human rights.

Contribution at the international level

- Pakistan has consistently played an active role in the Commission on Human Rights as well as in the relevant human rights forums, and contributed positively to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and formulation of most of the international conventions and universal norms in the promotion of civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.
- Pakistan was in the forefront in the struggle against apartheid. Pakistan continues to promote greater international recognition of the people's right to self-determination.
- Pakistan is a part of all major global initiatives in promoting intercultural dialogue and harmony to facilitate universal respect of all human rights in all societies and cultures.
- Pakistan was among the six initiators of the World Summit for Children and was also one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Pakistan is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- Pakistan played an active role in the negotiation of the decision to establish the Human Rights Council. Many of the formulations in resolution 60/251 reflect Pakistan's proposals and suggestions, which helped in forging international consensus.
- Pakistan looks forward to making a constructive contribution to the task of reviewing, rationalizing and improving the human rights machinery.

Contribution at the domestic level

- Promotion of human dignity, fundamental freedoms and human rights, equal status and rights of the followers of all religions and prohibition of

discrimination on account of religion, race, caste or creed etc., are enshrined in articles 9 to 29 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

- Sustainable democracy and empowerment at the grass-roots level, through good governance, have been established at the local, provincial and national levels, with a notable 33 per cent representation of women.

- Minorities in Pakistan represent 3.32 per cent of the total population. According to the Constitution of Pakistan, they enjoy equal rights and participate in mainstream politics, both through joint electorates and 5 per cent seats reserved for them in the Parliament and other elected bodies.

- Attention is being given to the social and economic emancipation of women. All forms of violence against women are punishable under the law including the infamous "honour killing".

- A national plan of action for child welfare, elimination of child labour and their rehabilitation through education and vocational training is being implemented.

Pakistan's commitments and voluntary pledges to further advance human rights both at the national and international levels

- Pakistan will continue to support all international efforts to achieve the universal ratification of core human rights treaties.

- Pakistan is working towards early ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against Torture.

- Upon the conclusion of the Parliament's ongoing consideration, an independent national human rights institution will be established with broad powers to investigate human rights violations in all aspects of its domestic constituencies.

- Pakistan will continue to promote awareness of human rights in the society by introducing a human rights component in educational curricula at all levels and mass awareness campaigns through the media and civil society, with particular emphasis on the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children and minorities.

- Pakistan will actively participate in the work of the Human Rights Council, with a view to facilitating the implementation of its mandate.